



City of Carmel

CARMEL PLAN COMMISSION SPECIAL STUDIES COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

OCTOBER 26, 2004

Minutes

The Special Meeting of the Special Studies Committee met at October 26, 2004 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members present: Jerry Chomanczuk; Wayne Haney; Mark Rattermann; thereby establishing a quorum.

DOCS Staff present: Mike Hollibaugh, Director; Jon Dobosiewicz, Planning Administrator

The following single item was considered:

- 1. Docket Nos. 04040035 OA and 04060036 Z: Village of WestClay**
The applicant seeks to amend their PUD Ordinance. The applicant also seeks to Rezone 30 acres from S-1/Residence-Estate to UD-Planned Unit Development. The site is located at 131st Street and Towne Road.
Filed by Brandon Burke of the Schneider Corp. for Brenwick Development Co.

David Warshauer, Barnes & Thornburg, 11 South Meridian Street, Indianapolis appeared before the Commission representing the applicant. Also in attendance: Tom Huston and Keith Lash with Brenwick Development.

Dave Warshauer displayed drawings that reflect current changes in the proposal. Six townhomes that were at the northeast corner of the 30-acre parcel have been eliminated and three, detached, single family dwellings put in their place. The entire 30-acre parcel on the north and west boundaries will have single family, detached housing. The number and massing of the townhouses west of Gleebe Street green and adjacent to the Neal property have been reduced. The senior housing villas have been reduced from 48 to 40 and they have been moved north of the retail access road. Two commercial buildings that were located on the south side of the retail access road and adjacent Town Road have been moved to the interior of the project opposite the amenity center, further insulating and limiting exposure of the retail area from Town Road. A round-about has been added at Gleebe Street and at the principal entrance to the retail area off of 131st Street in order for traffic to flow smoothly.

The number of townhouse buildings at the northwest corner of the southern 83-acre parcel that buffers residential from retail have been reduced from 5 to 4.

Some changes have been made to the plan in an effort to “tweak” it and generally create more buffer. The petitioner is proposing a change in the overall density from 2.0 units per acre to 2.2 units per acre, exclusive of the senior housing—2.5 units per acre with the senior housing. Higher density is proposed than is in the Village now—but this is not a high-density project. Density is not a new concept in terms of development, and the Village is trying to return to that concept.

The issue with density may just be a stand-in for other issues such as price of the home (higher density means lower price?) During the 20th century, the larger the lot, the lower the density, and typically the higher home price—a suburban paradigm for years. The Village of WestClay has shown that smaller lot/higher density projects with high architectural standards can command a premium price. Comparisons were made with the Lakes at Hayden Run, a typical ROSO subdivision approved in the last few years, to the Brownstones at the Village of WestClay. The prices are comparable—the average is around \$250,000. From a matter of price—higher density and lower density—one is not inherently better than the other; it is a matter of individual taste and the needs of the consumer. Does higher density translate into less in the way of architectural quality? The Village of WestClay has the strongest architectural standards in the County—the City does not have standards as strong in its commercial overlay districts.

Does higher density translate into more traffic? Everyone believes that more units, by definition, mean more traffic. However, the figures in the traffic study reveal that a simple count fails to take into consideration one of the basic inputs into traffic—the number of cars and the number of drivers. The senior housing generates very little peak hour or any other traffic. Townhomes and other attached homes that generally have a smaller household size have fewer cars and the trip generation charts show that. Edwards & Kelsey, traffic engineers, shows that townhomes generate one-third to one-half of the traffic in peak hours as do single family homes. You cannot compare the effects of a density increase in townhomes with that of adding detached, single family homes in a standard subdivision. Even with the proposed density increase, the traffic impact is less than was projected in 1999 based on a study of 2.2 dwelling units per acre, the same as the current proposed density, but with a daycare center included—a high, peak hour traffic generator. Attached, owner-occupied housing also has substantially fewer school age children than detached, single family housing.

Mr. Warshauer went over three different scenarios regarding the traffic. Scenario 1, the final trip generation summary developed after months of working with the City and John Myers, traffic consultant for the City, dealt with peak hour traffic and was based upon a density of 2.2 units per acre as initially proposed in 1991. Scenario 2 showed 2.0 units per acre but added 216 units of senior housing and kept the daycare facility. Scenario 3 shows traffic at 2.0 per single family

homes, apartments, and attached dwellings, adds the senior housing, allocates a portion of the 274,000 square feet of commercial space—the maximum proposed west of Town Road—and takes out the daycare facility, a significant traffic generator.

Scenario 4, the current proposal, increases the density to 2.2 units per acre without the senior housing and without the daycare center. The combined peak hour traffic generation is at 3,039 trips, less than the number of trips, 11% less than the number of trips contained in the initial scenario, scenario #1, in which the traffic impact commitments of \$1,289,000 were made.

Looking at the type of housing in the proposed density, the fact that townhomes generate less traffic, fewer cars, fewer drivers, fewer kids that cause people to make trips, a decrease is shown in terms of total traffic at the 2.2 density.

Discussion followed regarding traffic issues. Jennifer Pearz, traffic engineer with Kelsey and Edwards, responded to questions regarding trips generated by the inclusion of the daycare facility. There is no data to support how many trips were internal and how many were external. The guess is that the numbers came from a 4 or 5 mile radius, probably local trips that were already on the road.

Tom Huston, partner in Brenwick Development, addressed the Committee. Brenwick would like to substitute loft space, residential use, for office space on the second and third floor. As a practical matter, it is a trade-off for the unused commercial space. The traffic would actually be reduced because office traffic and visitors to offices would not be coming and going. Commercial, retail, and three-story is critical to the success of the Village.

Brenwick is doing everything it can to help—Towne Road is a major project—these are not two secondary roads, they are two major arteries. Brenwick is putting up 2.2 million dollars for road improvements. Brenwick is building the round about at 126th and 131st Streets as well as the one being added in the Village area. Brenwick is not asking someone else to pay for these roadway improvements.

Public Comments:

Charlie Scott, 12040 Durbin Drive, Crossfields Subdivision, disagreed with spreading density in new areas over areas that have already been platted. What is the density being considered for the 30 acres, and what is the 2.2 million dollars from Brenwick based on—what density for the same 30 acres?

Marilyn Anderson, 3884 Shelborne Court, said the Daycare would not draw traffic from miles away but traffic already going by—the Goddard School is already under construction at Michigan Road. How many living units were approved in 1999 and how does that compare with the current proposal? What has changed that would say the 2.2 units per acre is a good idea? Traffic has increased by virtue of the extension of 146th Street. Between 1999 and now, there is a great deal more traffic than anticipated. “Hear-say” from the neighbors—from the cap

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on commercial, they can live with Towne Road, but not with the increase in density. Density is still an issue.

Dave Warshauer then addressed the public comments. The senior housing was counted in the traffic counts; the density exclusive of senior housing is 2.2, including senior housing the density is 2.5 units per acre. In 1999, 1384 units were approved. The 30-acre parcel computes to 4.5 units per acre. The commitments made in 1999 took into account an overall density of 2.2 units per acre. The dollar amount allocated in 1999 with those commitments was sufficient to address the infrastructure improvements. The 1999 commitments were done with the City's consultant, with specific traffic improvements at certain intersections in western Clay Township that could be improved and that would be adversely affected by the additional traffic of the Village. Specific improvements were identified so that specific dollar amounts could be allocated to mitigate the traffic impact of the Village of WestClay. However, some of those projects that were committed to have already been done by other developers. The 4.5 density on the 30 acres has already been taken into account in other projects.

The Engineering Department is currently assessing and prioritizing where the limited resources available are to be spent within the C-260 annexation area. The 131st Street and Towne Road area is definitely a priority—two major roadways within the C-260 area.

Department Comments, Jon Dobosiewicz. Point of clarification: None of the negotiations between the City and Brenwick has included the 30-acre parcel. The 2.2 million dollars represents improvements that Brenwick committed to with respect to the amount of traffic that was being generated within the original study. In addition, improvements will be made along Towne Road. In addition to the \$2.2 million is a result of the \$1.28 million—the original plus the estimated cost of construction of improvements that would occur along Towne Road.

Jon Dobosiewicz addressed negative comments referring to the ROSO Ordinance that has “driven up density.” Jon Dobosiewicz said he would be willing to put together a report for the Plan Commission reflecting year by year what an individual would be able to develop their property at. The allowable density from 1990 until today, between 116th Street and 141st Street has been cut in half. Prior to 1990, the requirement on board was that if you were not on water and sewer, it was a minimum one-acre lot—that is why there was not a lot of development seen in western Clay Township of a subdivision nature less than that. If there is water and sewer availability, a lot can be developed at 15,000 square feet—the minimum lot size within the S-1 District. The Cluster Ordinance was adopted in 1990 and was an optional ordinance that basically allowed developers to create smaller lots but to provide open space—again, an option. In late 1997, early 1998, the Residential Open Space Ordinance was adopted. ROSO established a requirement for all subdivisions with a gross density of over one unit per acre to comply, there was no longer an option to comply. The ROSO Ordinance has more than cut in half the allowable density on a lot serviced by water and sewer. There was never an ordinance or requirement of 5 acres for one house. There was never a requirement that lots had to be one acre in size to be serviced by water and sewer.

Mike Hollibaugh, Director of DOCS, reiterated to the Committee that the S-1 Zoning has ALWAYS allowed 15,000 square-foot lots.

Jerry Chomanczuk said he basically liked the peripheral area and the senior housing. There is most probably a market for the townhomes, but agreed with the concern of Committee members that the density levels may generate more traffic and create more issues than the area is prepared to handle. The attached housing along the perimeter is an issue—whether it is timing of full development, or moving puzzle pieces around to address.

Tom Huston said he would respond, however, Brenwick cannot get to 2.0 density and keep the townhouses.

The consensus of the Committee: Density at 2.2 is still high—the 30-acre area has a density of 4.5 units per acre.

Mark Rattermann asked the petitioner to address guest parking in the townhome area at the proposed density.

Jon Dobosiewicz responded that the parking provides for one and one-half additional spaces in the townhome area, but Jon offered to put some figures together.

The next meeting of the Special Study Committee will take place Wednesday, November 3, 2004 in the Caucus Rooms of City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Jerry Chomanczuk, Chairperson

Ramona Hancock, Secretary